



JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

Senate Bill 570

February 12, 2014

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today on Senate Bill 570.

This bill was brought to my attention by the Department of Transportation (DOT). A little-known provision of the statutes currently requires a driver who intends to pass another vehicle to make his intentions known to the other driver by way of using an audible signal, such as the car's horn. As you can guess, few people are aware of this requirement, and even fewer comply.

The bill eliminates the reference to an audible signal or warning by the driver of an overtaking, or passing vehicle, so that the requirements on the driver of the vehicle being passed apply regardless of whether an audible signal or warning is made. This bill makes no change to the way in which lighting and turn signals are used to communicate a driver's intention to pass another vehicle.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on this bill. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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DATE: February 12, 2014

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Transportation, Public Safety, and Veterans and Military Affairs

The Honorable Jerry Petrowski, Chair

FROM: Tom Rhatican, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 570 (yielding to an overtaking vehicle)

Chairman Petrowski and Committee Members:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in support of Wisconsin Senate Bill 570 (SB 570). SB 570 relates to the yielding to an overtaking vehicle.

Under current law, a motorist that is being passed on the left by another vehicle traveling in the same direction is required to give way to the right in favor of the overtaking vehicle, upon hearing the overtaking vehicle give an audible signal indicating their intent to pass. In addition, vehicles traveling at a slow enough speed, which impedes the normal and reasonable movement of traffic, are required to yield the roadway, if practicable, to an overtaking vehicle upon hearing an audible signal from an overtaking vehicle. The driver of the vehicle that is being passed may not increase his or her speed until the overtaking vehicle has completed its pass.

Current law, however, does not require the driver of a passing vehicle to make an audible signal that he or she intends to pass. SB 570 eliminates the statutory references to an audible signal, or warning, by the driver of an overtaking vehicle; ensuring that the requirements on the driver of the vehicle being passed are applied regardless of whether an audible signal or warning is made.

The requirement in current law that the driver of an overtaking vehicle give an audible signal indicating their intent to pass is often not adhered to. As a result, such an audible signal or warning may at times be interpreted by other drivers as an aggressive or anti-social driving behavior. Whether an audible signal is given by the driver of an overtaking vehicle or not, the driver being passed should appropriately yield the roadway to continue safe and efficient traffic flow on Wisconsin roadways.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Nate Yahn, WisDOT legislative advisor, at (608) 266-1114.